

**UPPER COLORADO RIVER
ENDANGERED FISH
RECOVERY PROGRAM**

**COMMUNICATIONS/
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

**FY 2001
(October 1, 2000 - September 30, 2001)**

**Prepared By
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MISSION

- To support the success of the Recovery Program in recovering the fish by assuring that the public understands what is being done and why, and has confidence that the process is honest, open, sensitive, clear, and understandable.

GOALS

- To develop public involvement strategies at the beginning of any and all projects.
- To educate target audiences about endangered fish and to increase their understanding of and support for the recovery of these fish species at local, state and national levels.
- To provide opportunities for the public to actively participate in activities that support recovery.
- To improve communication within the Recovery Program.

SITUATION

Established in January 1988, the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program is a cooperative effort to recover the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub and bonytail in the Upper Basin, while providing for water development to proceed in a manner compatible with applicable state and federal laws. The Recovery Program's goal is to recover and delist the endangered fishes by restoring and establishing self-sustaining populations and protecting sufficient habitat to support them. The Program was initially funded for 15 years (through 2003).

The Recovery Program's five principal elements are: 1. Habitat Management 2. Habitat Development and Maintenance 3. Native Fish Stocking 4. Nonnative Fish Control and 5. Research, Data Management and Monitoring.

In 1999, a bill was introduced to Congress requesting a commitment to fund the Recovery Program for an additional 10 years (through 2013.) Tied to the bill is funding for the San Juan River Basin Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Program. Initiated in 1991, the San Juan Recovery Program is working to recover the Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker.

Public Attitudes

The results of a public attitude survey conducted in 1995 by Colorado State University for the Recovery Program should be considered when developing public involvement strategies, including:

- When thinking of endangered species, the majority of people do not think of fish.
- Word of mouth and newspapers were the most frequently named sources of information regarding endangered fish. Educational presentations, public meetings and slide shows/videos ranked least in importance.
- Many respondents did not believe, or did not know, the fish are endangered. Informational campaigns should highlight basic issues concerning the status of the fish before providing a rationale to protect them.
- About half of the respondents held a positive attitude toward the endangered fish. The strongest positive general attitude was given by environmental group members (70%). Between 42% and 48% of individuals in the other three strata held a positive general attitude. Between 31% and 40% of these respondents were neutral, suggesting that many could be persuaded to become supportive of the recovery effort. The most negative of the four groups were the elected officials (24%).
- Although most respondents believed that the endangered fish have a right to exist, many linked this right to benefits that could potentially accrue to humans.

Public Attitudes (continued)

- Among the reasons for recovering fish, 82% believed that recovering the endangered fish is as important as recovering endangered birds and mammals. Nearly three-quarters felt that endangered fish helped to maintain balance in nature (73%).
- Over three-quarters of those interviewed had not heard of the Recovery Program. Elected officials were most aware of the recovery effort (42%) while the general public was least aware (12%).
- Two-thirds of respondents supported the effort to recover the endangered fish.

CRRP Participant Attitudes

In 1998 and 1999, the I&E Committee assessed the Program's public involvement efforts. Several recommendations were forthcoming:

- Public involvement planning should be integrated into the Recovery Program's decision-making process
- Internal communication should be improved
- Public involvement efforts should be coordinated to prevent providing mixed messages

Target Audiences

- General public
- Elected Officials
- Land and pond owners
- Anglers
- River rafters and guides
- Environmental organizations
- Water development interests
- Power user interests
- Recovery Program participants
(Includes local, state and federal government agencies)

UPPER COLORADO RIVER ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM PARTNERS

Colorado River Energy Distributors Association
Colorado Water Congress
Environmental Defense
State of Colorado
State of Utah
State of Wyoming
The Nature Conservancy
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Utah Water Users Association
Western Area Power Administration
Wyoming Water Association

SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM PARTNERS

Jicarilla Apache Tribe
Navajo Nation
Southern Ute Tribe
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
State of Colorado
State of New Mexico
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Water Development Interests

STRATEGIES

It is imperative to the success of this communications/public involvement plan that it be considered “a work in progress,” with the flexibility to update as necessary to seize opportunities as they arise and to make adjustments to coincide with Recovery Program activities.

1. **NEWS MEDIA.** Print and broadcast news media are the key source of information to a broad range of individuals. A top priority for the I & E Coordinator and all involved with the Recovery Program is to proactively seek news media coverage on Program activities. Editorial board meetings should be scheduled and op-ed pieces prepared when appropriate.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator/All CRRP Participants
COMPLETION DATE: Ongoing
2. **COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARDS.** Establish in Grand Junction, Colorado, with membership of city officials, county commissioners, and local congressional staff from Fruita, Palisade, Clifton, Grand Valley (similar boards already in place in Craig, Colorado and Vernal, Utah)
RESPONSIBILITY: Program Director/I & E Coordinator
COMPLETION DATE: Meet twice/year
3. **SPEAKER’S BUREAU.** Formalize the Program’s existing task of making presentations to targeted groups. Identify short list of individuals who can serve as Program spokespersons.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator
COMPLETION DATE: Ongoing
4. **WEBSITE.** Maintain and promote updated CRRP website.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator and Office Assistant
COMPLETION DATE: Ongoing
5. **PROGRAM MATERIALS.** Maintain updated Recovery Program materials, ensuring consistent identity, i.e. brochure, fact sheets, exhibit, video(s). Invite feedback with response card.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator
COMPLETION DATE: Ongoing

6. **PUBLICATIONS.** Produce and distribute publications deemed necessary to provide update information to target audiences, including a biannual newsletter.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator
COMPLETION DATE: Varies depending upon type of publication and target audience. See tactics and CRRP planning calendar.
7. **SPECIAL EVENTS AND PUBLIC MEETINGS.** Strategically identify opportunities to reach target audiences through participation in special events and public meetings.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator/I & E Committee/CRRP Participants
COMPLETION DATE: Ongoing
8. **INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE.** Coordinate installation of interpretive signs/exhibits at public facilities with high visitation in target communities. Place program exhibit in highly visible public locations.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator/I & E Committee/CRRP Participants
COMPLETION DATE: FY 2001-2004
9. **ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS.** Target key individuals for one-on-one meetings.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator/I & E Committee/Program Director
COMPLETION DATE: Ongoing
10. **SAN JUAN ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAM.** Coordinate I&E efforts with the San Juan Endangered Fish Recovery Program to assure consistent and clear messages to target audiences.
RESPONSIBILITY: I & E Coordinator/Committee/CRRP staff/SJRP staff
COMPLETION DATE: Ongoing

EVALUATION

- Document print and broadcast news media placements.
- Document the number of public meetings held and presentations made, including attendance numbers.
- Track visitation numbers at sites where interpretive exhibits are in place.
- Track comments from response card(s)

BUDGET

Labor

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| Contract assistance for website design | \$ 6,000 |
| Contract assistance for graphic design | \$ 5,000 |

Travel

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| Utah representative to attend I&E Committee meetings | \$ 1,000 |
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Other

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| Public involvement tuition (up to three individuals) | \$ 1,500 |
| News Clipping Service | \$ 1,000 |
| Newsletter Printing | \$ 9,000 |
| Congressional Briefing Packet | \$ 2,500 |
| Educational Materials | \$ 5,000 |
| Recovery Program video | \$ 8,000 |
| “Plumbing Map” publication | \$ 3,000 |
| Public Meetings/Exhibit Fees | \$ 2,000 |
| Community Advisory Boards – Grand Junction | \$ 600 |
| Film/film developing | \$ 400 |

TOTAL: \$45,000

NOTE: In addition to the above budget, \$30,000 per year for the next four years has been requested for interpretive signage at Vernal, Grand Junction and Lake Powell (total of \$120,000).

